

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13026 01 OF 05 211734Z
ACTION EB-08

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USOECD

FOR BARRACLOUGH, EB/ITP ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, OECD
SUBJECT: AD HOC STEEL GROUP

BELOW IS TEXT OF "NON PAPER" WHICH DEPUTY SECRETARY
GENERAL WOOTTON HAS ASKED MISSION TO TRANSMIT TO
HEADS OF US DEL TO STEEL GROUP. WOOTTON IS SENDING
SAME PAPER TO DAVIGNON AND HEAD OF JAPANESE DEL TO

APRIL 24-25 TRILATERALS AND HOPES ADDRESSES WILL HAVE
A CHANCE TO READ IT BEFORE MEETING TAKES PLACE.
WOOTTON HAS ASKED THAT PAPER BE GIVEN ONLY TO
YOU AND HEIMLICH SO WE APPRECIATE YOUR GETTING A
COPY TO HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BEGIN TEXT OF NON-PAPER

FUTURE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION ON STEEL

1. THE ISSUES

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1. THE OECD AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE STEEL INDUSTRY
HAS HELD FOUR MEETINGS IN THE PAST TEN MONTHS TO DEAL
WITH THE CRISIS IN THE WORLD STEEL INDUSTRY. IT
HAS REACHED A CONSENSUS VIEW THAT THE CONSIDERABLE
EXCESS CAPACITY IN THE WORLD STEEL INDUSTRY REQUIRES

A LONGER-TERM APPROACH OF RESTRUCTURING AND MODERNISATION. IT HAS ALSO PROVIDED A BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON A NUMBER OF NATIONAL MEASURES DESIGNED TO MEET A CRISIS SITUATION WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY A PRESSURE TO FIND MARKETS, FIERCE COMPETITION AND UNACCEPTABLY LOW PRICES WHICH HAVE DISRUPTED TRADE PATTERNS AND IMPEDE THE LONGER-TERM RATIONALISATION OF THE INDUSTRY. THE GROUP HAS ESTABLISHED A CONTINUOUS INFORMATION COLLECTION SYSTEM TO MONITOR SHORT-TERM AND LONGER-TERM DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORLD STEEL INDUSTRY AND HAS AGREED SEVERAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE EXTRAORDINARY AND SEVERE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THEIR STEEL INDUSTRIES.

2. WHILE THE NATIONAL MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN MAY BRING SOME EASING OF THE CRISIS SITUATION, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE MAJOR PROBLEM OF EXCESS CAPACITY REMAINS AND THAT THE CONTINUATION OF LOW GROWTH RATES IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IS EXTENDING THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION ON STEEL EVER FARTHER INTO THE FUTURE. IT IS TIMELY THEREFORE TO REFLECT ON THE NATURE, INTENSITY AND OBJECTIVES OF FUTURE COLLECTIVE EFFORTS, ON WHAT COMMON POLICY COMMITMENTS ARE DESIRABLE TO DEAL WITH THIS CRISIS SITUATION IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY, AND HOW AND AMONG WHICH COUNTRIES

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THEY CAN MOST EFFECTIVELY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY BE AGREED.

3. THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA WHICH SHOULD UNDERLIE THE PROCEDURES FOR CO-OPERATION AND ACTION AND THE CHOICE OF

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THE FORUM IF THE BROADER INTERESTS OF OECD COUNTRIES
ARE TO BE ADEQUATELY SERVED.

(L) TRADE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

4. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE TRADE PLEDGE, TRADE IN STEEL
PRODUCTS SHOULD REMAIN AS FREE AS POSSIBLE AND
RECOURSE TO PROTECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE EXCEPTIONAL,
STRICTLY LIMITED IN SCOPE AND TIME, AND READILY
REVERSIBLE. SECTORAL NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS IN
A NARROW TRADE CONTEXT WOULD CARRY SUBSTANTIAL RISK
OF BECOMING A PERMANENT FEATURE OF TRADE IN STEEL
PRODUCTS AND OF SPREADING TO OTHER SECTORS, BOTH IN
STEEL FABRICATING AND CONSUMING INDUSTRIES AND IN
UNRELATED SECTORS. THEY WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE AN
APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT GOVERNMENTS
SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ACT PROMPTLY AND FIRMLY
TO COPE WITH A CRISIS SITUATION IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY,

WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT THEIR MEASURES CAN RECEIVE
INTERNATIONAL APPROVAL, BASED ON CLOSE CONSULTATION
WITH INTERESTED TRADING PARTNERS. THE OECD PRINCIPLES
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ADOPTED IN THE AD HOC GROUP IN NOVEMBER PROVIDE A
STARTING POINT FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION SEEKING TO
ELABORATE THE APPROPRIATE RANGE OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT
CRITERIA AND ACTION RESPONSES. THE NEXT MEETING OF
THE AD HOC GROUP ON 22-23RD MAY WOULD PROVIDE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY FORWARD THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS
AMONG OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES; A NEGOTIATING
WORKING PARTY MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED TO FACILITATE
THE WORK.

6. IT WOULD SEEM APPROPRIATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO
BE HELD INITIALLY AMONG OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES. WHILE

CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE EXTENDED TO THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZING COUNTRIES OF THE THIRD WORLD, APPROACHES TO THEM BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY PREPARED AND AIMED AT AVOIDING NORTH-SOUTH CONFRONTATION AND PRESSURES FOR ORGANISED MARKETING ARRANGEMENTS. THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES ARE NOT, IN ANY EVENT, MAJOR FACTORS IN THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS SITUATION. THEIR POLICIES FOR INCREASING THEIR STEEL CAPACITY WILL MAKE THEM OF RAPIDLY GROWING IMPORTANCE.

(2) BROADER STEEL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

7. ALTHOUGH CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TRADE POLICY IS IMPORTANT, IT CANNOT SUBSTITUTE FOR INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CO-OPERATION AIMED AT ASSURING A GREATER DEGREE OF ADJUSTMENT OF PRODUCTION CAPACITY TO THE DEMAND FOR STEEL, WHICH WILL IN TURN DIMINISH THE PRESSURES IN THE TRADE POLICY FIELD AND HASTEN THE DAY OF THE RETURN TO FREE MARKET CONDITIONS. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE AD HOC GROUP CONCLUDED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT ITS MEETING IN FEBRUARY THAT THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD MOVE PROMPTLY TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY ANALYTICAL WORK TO BRING TO THE GROUP AN INDEPENDENT VIEW OF THE LONGER-TERM SUPPLY AND DEMAND SITUATION FOR DISCUSSION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES. AS CONSENSUS EMERGED, GOVERNMENT POLICIES COULD MOVE TO FACILITATE THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS. SIMILARLY, DISCUSSION OF INVESTMENT INTENTIONS AND A COLLECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE OUTLOOK FOR THE STEEL INDUSTRY WOULD PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF OVER OR UNDER SUPPLY AND HENCE EASE THE IMPACT OF CYCLICAL FLUCTUATION AND FACILITATE LONGER TERM STRUCTURAL CHANGE. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRICE FORMATION POLICIES WOULD NEED TO BE EXAMINED IN THIS SAME CONTEXT. IN DEVELOPING DEMAND SCENARIOS, THE WORK BEING CARRIED OUT IN WORKING PARTY 2 OF THE ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS IN THE INTERFUTURES PROJECT, WOULD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR

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THE PROJECTION OF THE MACRO-ECONOMIC
ENVIRONMENT.

8. IT IS INDEED THIS HORIZONTAL APPROACH TO THE
STEEL INDUSTRY IN ITS GENERAL ECONOMIC AND ECONOMIC
POLICY ENVIRONMENT THAT COULD USEFULLY CONTRIBUTE
TO FUTURE CO-OPERATION. THE RELATED SECTORS, CONSUMING
INDUSTRY IMPLICATIONS, AND, AS REQUIRED, CONSIDERATIONS
OF ENERGY, RAW MATERIALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES
WOULD NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THE APPROACH
WOULD THUS NEED TO BE BOTH OPERATIONAL, TO PROVIDE
POLICY GUIDANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING/MODERNISATION
EFFORTS, AND BASED ON ECONOMIC ANALYSES, TO PROVIDE
THE BASIS FOR BROAD, AS OPPOSED TO SECTORAL, POLICY
CO-OPERATION.

9. IN KEEPING WITH THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE AD HOC
GROUP, THE SECRETARIAT HAS SET UP A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY
TEAM TO SUPPORT THE STEEL WORK IN THE OECD.

TEAM MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM THE INDUSTRY
DIVISION, THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION UNIT AND THE
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT. ADDITIONAL
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INPUTS WILL BE OBTAINED, AS REQUIRED, FROM THE TRADE
DIRECTORATE, THE COMBINED ENERGY STAFF OF THE OECD/
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY, FROM THE MANPOWER AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE AND FROM THE ENVIRONMENT
DIRECTORATE. ECONOMISTS WITH SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE IN
THE STEEL INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN RECRUITED ON TEMPORARY,

SUPERNUMERARY POSTS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE SUPPORT.

II. POSSIBLE FORA

10. GIVEN THE CONSIDERATIONS SET OUT IN I ABOVE, AND THE CAPABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION TO DEAL WITH STEEL ISSUES ON A BROAD POLICY BASIS, AND PARTICULARLY TO FACILITATE LONGER-TERM RESTRUCTURING AND MODERNISATION EFFORTS, A RATHER CONVINCING CASE CAN BE MADE FOR LOCATING FUTURE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION ON STEEL IN THE OECD.

11. A PARTICULAR ADVANTAGE OF THE ORGANISATION IS THE FLEXIBILITY IT PROVIDES IN SETTING THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRECISE WISHES OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. THUS, IN AREAS WHERE ESSENTIALLY FREE MARKET FORCES SHOULD PREVAIL, GOVERNMENT POLICY COMMITMENTS CAN BE MUTED. IF STRICT RULES ARE TO BE NEGOTIATED, THE OECD CONVENTION EMPOWERS THE OECD COUNCIL, IN CARRYING OUT ITS BROAD OBJECTIVES, TO TAKE WHATEVER DECISIONS MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WISH. MEMBER GOVERNMENTS ARE THEN BOUND TO IMPLEMENT THESE DECISIONS. ANY LIMITATIONS ENTAILED IN OPERATING IN

THE OECD FRAMEWORK ARE THUS A FUNCTION OF THE DESIRE OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS RATHER THAN OF INHERENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ORGANIZATIONAL LIMITATIONS OR CONSTRAINTS.

12. SIMILARLY, MEMBER GOVERNMENTS ARE FREE TO DECIDE AS THEY WISH AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT ASSOCIATE NON-MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WITH THE WORK OF THE ORGANISATION. THIS FLEXIBILITY SHOULD PROVE HELPFUL IN THIS RESPECT SINCE THE INVOLVEMENT OF NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE WORK ON STEEL IS LIKELY TO BE AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. EVIDENTLY, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT DEVELOPING THIRD WORLD PRODUCERS OF STEEL BE IN A POSITION TO PLAN IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEMAND-SUPPLY OUTLOOK; MOREOVER, THESE EMERGING INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO COME INCREASINGLY CLOSE TO PRESENT OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THEIR ABILITY AND READINESS TO TAKE COMMITMENTS IN THEIR TRADE POLICIES ON STEEL. MEMBER

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COUNTRIES WILL NO DOUBT WISH TO CONSIDER THIS
QUESTION IN ITS BROAD POLITICAL CONTEXT. FROM A
PURELY LEGAL POINT OF VIEW, ALL OPTIONS ARE OPEN.

13. POSSIBLE OECD AND OECD-LINKED FORA FOR FUTURE
STEEL WORK, ASIDE FROM THE PRESENT AD HOC WORKING
GROUP ARRANGEMENTS, ARE INDICATED UNDER FOUR HEADINGS.
NEITHER

OF THE LAST TWO ALTERNATIVES MAY BE USED IN
CONJUNCTION WITH EITHER OF THE FIRST TWO ARRANGEMENTS;
INDEED, ALTERNATIVE (3) MIGHT BE SEEN AS A PARTICULAR
MEANS OF ASSOCIATING NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE
WORK ON STEEL.

(L) IN THE OECD: A COMMITTEE OR WORKING PARTY
OF THE COUNCIL

THE POWERS OF A COMMITTEE OR WORKING PARTY OF THE
COUNCIL CAN BE AS FLEXIBLE AS AGREED IN THE MANDATE

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL.

THE OECD BODY WOULD BE OPEN TO PARTICIPATION BY
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ALL OECD MEMBERS AND THE COMMISSION OF THE EEC WHICH
TAKES PART IN THE WORK OF THE ORGANISATION.

THE COUNCIL COULD TAKE DECISIONS WITH REGARD TO THE REPRESENTATION IN THE MEETINGS OF NON-MEMBER STATES.

(2) IN THE OECD FRAMEWORK: AN ACTIVITY UNDER PART II OF THE OECD BUDGET

IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE WITHIN THE OECD FRAMEWORK TO CREATE A BODY THAT CAN OPERATE MORE AUTONOMOUSLY THAN A PLENARY COMMITTEE OR WORKING PARTY OF THE

COUNCIL. THE COUNCIL COULD DELEGATE PART OF ITS AUTHORITY IN A PARTICULAR AREA TO A STEERING COMMITTEE OR A BODY SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY. THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DURATION OF THE BODY COULD BE NEGOTIATED SEPARATELY BUT WITH THE LIAISON WITH THE OECD FINALLY BEING ENSURED BY A DECISION OF THE COUNCIL. THE PROCEDURES OF THE BODY COULD THUS VARY FROM THOSE OF THE OECD, E.G. PROVISION CAN BE MADE FOR WEIGHTED VOTING.

SUCH A BODY WOULD NORMALLY BE OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISATION, BUT IF SOME MEMBER COUNTRIES DID NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE, SUCH A DECISION IS EASIER FOR THEM WITH REGARD TO THIS TYPE OF BODY THAN FOR A PLENARY COMMITTEE OF THE OECD.

PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK BY NON-MEMBER STATES MAY ALSO BE ARRANGED MORE FLEXIBLY SINCE SUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DECISIONS WOULD HAVE LESS WEIGHT AS PRECEDENTS FOR THE WORK OF THE OECD ITSELF.

(3) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

A THIRD MODEL MIGHT BE AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH MIGHT BE LINKED WITH OR SPONSORED BY THE OECD.

THE WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT AND THE DEGREE AND LENGTH OF COMMITMENT BY PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE DECIDED IN THE TERMS ON WHICH THE CONFERENCE WAS CONVENED. A SINGLE CONFERENCE MIGHT BE ENVISAGED OR THE CONFERENCE MIGHT RECONVENE AGAIN AFTER, SAY,

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ONE YEAR.

THE RANGE OF COUNTRIES WHICH MIGHT BE INVITED
TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONFERENCE COULD BE QUITE WIDE.
THERE WOULD NEED TO BE PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN
COUNTRIES IN THE ROLE AND THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

(4) A MORE PRIVATE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT
(SUCH AS THE CONSENSUS ON EXPORT CREDITS)

THIS TYPE OF BODY WOULD NORMALLY BE ENVISAGED
WHERE A GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES WISH TO BIND
THEMSELVES TO CERTAIN COURSES OF ACTION. IT AGAIN
ALLOWS DETAILED NEGOTIATION OF THE POLICIES THAT THEY
WOULD PURSUE BUT HAS THE DISADVANTAGE AS FAR AS STEEL

IS CONCERNED, OF NORMALLY BEING A PROCESS THAT IS
KEPT VERY CONFIDENTIAL AND THEREFORE LACKS POLITICAL
VISIBILITY IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.

THE PARTICIPATION OF COUNTRIES COULD BE
DECIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DETAILED AIMS IT
WAS INTENDED TO PURSUE.

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